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THE
FALL
OF
ROBESPIERRE.

AN
HISTORIC DRAMA.

BY S. T. COLERIDGE,
OF JESUS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

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1794.

[PRICE ONE SHILLING.]

THE
F A L L
OF
ROBERT



BY R. T. COLEMAN

WITH A PREFACE BY THE EDITOR

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TO
H. MARTIN, Esq.
OF
JESUS COLLEGE,
CAMBRIDGE.

DEAR SIR,

ACCEPT, as a small testimony of my grateful attachment, the following Dramatic Poem, in which I have endeavoured to detail, in an interesting form, the fall of a man, whose great bad actions have cast a disastrous lustre on his name. In the execution of the work, as intricacy of plot could not have been attempted without a gross violation of recent facts, it has been my sole aim to imitate the impassioned and highly figurative language of the French Orators, and to develop the characters of the chief actors on a vast stage of horrors.

Yours fraternally,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

Jesus College,
September 22, 1794.

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

A C T I.

SCENE, The Thuilleries.

BARRERE.

THE tempest gathers—be it mine to seek
A friendly shelter, ere it bursts upon him.
But where? and how? I fear the Tyrant's soul—
Sudden in action, fertile in resource,
And rising awful 'mid impending ruins;
In splendor gloomy, as the midnight meteor,
That fearless thwarts the elemental war.
When last in secret conference we met,
He scowl'd upon me with suspicious rage,
Making his eye the inmate of my bosom.
I know he scorns me—and I feel, I hate him—
Yet there is in him that which makes me tremble!

(Exit.)

Enter TALLIEN and LEGENDRE.

TALLIEN.

It was Barrere, Legendre! didst thou mark him?
Abrupt he turn'd, yet linger'd as he went,
And towards us cast a look of doubtful meaning.

LEGENDRE.

I mark'd him well. I met his eye's last glance;
It menac'd not so proudly as of yore.
Methought he would have spoke—but that he dar'd not—
Such agitation darken'd on his brow.

TALLIEN.

'Twas all-distrusting guilt that kept from bursting
 Th' imprison'd secret struggling in the face:
 E'en as the sudden breeze upstarting onwards
 Hurries the thunder cloud, that pois'd awhile
 Hung in mid air, red with its mutinous burthen.

LEGENBRE.

Perfidious Traitor!—still afraid to bask
 In the full blaze of power, the rustling serpent
 Lurks in the thicket of the Tyrant's greatness,
 Ever prepar'd to sting who shelters him.
 Each thought, each action in himself converges;
 And love and friendship on his coward heart
 Shine like the powerless sun on polar ice:
 To all attach'd, by turns deserting all,
 Cunning and dark—a necessary villain!

TALLIEN.

Yet much depends upon him—well you know
 With plausible harangue 'tis his to paint
 Defeat like victory—and blind the mob
 With truth-mix'd fallhood. They led on by him,
 And wild of head to work their own destruction,
 Support with uproar what he plans in darkness.

LEGENBRE.

O what a precious name is Liberty
 To scare or cheat the simple into slaves!
 Yes—we must gain him over: by dark hints
 We'll shew enough to rouse his watchful fears,
 Till the cold coward blaze a patriot.
 O Danton! murder'd friend! assist my counsels—
 Hover around me on sad memory's wings,
 And pour thy daring vengeance in my heart.
 Tallien! if but to-morrow's fateful sun
 Beholds the Tyrant living—we are dead!

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TALLIEN.

Yet his keen eye that flashes mighty meanings—

LEGENBRE.

Fear not—or rather fear th' alternative,
And seek for courage e'en in cowardice—
But see—hither he comes—let us away!
His brother with him, and the bloody Couthon,
And high of haughty spirit, young St. Just.

(*Exeunt.*)

Enter ROBESPIERRE, COUTHON, ST. JUST, and
ROBESPIERRE, Junior.

ROBESPIERRE.

What? did La Fayette fall before my power?
And did I conquer Roland's spotless virtues?
The fervent eloquence of Vergniaud's tongue?
And Brissot's thoughtful soul unbribed and bold?
Did zealot armies haste in vain to save them?
What! did th' assassin's dagger aim its point
Vain, as a *dream* of murder, at my bosom?
And shall I dread the soft luxurious Tallien?
Th' Adonis Tallien? banquet-hunting Tallien?
Him, whose heart flutters at the dice-box? Him,
Who ever on the harlots' downy pillow
Requies his head impure to feverish slumbers!

ST. JUST.

I cannot fear him—yet we must not scorn him.
Was it not Antony that conquer'd Brutus,
Th' Adonis, banquet-hunting Antony?
The state is not yet purified: and though
The stream runs clear, yet at the bottom lies
The thick black sediment of all the factions—
It needs no magic hand to stir it up!

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COUTHON.

O we did wrong to spare them—fatal error !
 Why lived Legendre, when that Danton died ?
 And Collot d'Herbois dangerous in crimes ?
I've fear'd him, since his iron heart endured
 To make of Lyons one vast human shambles,
 Compar'd with which the sun-scorcht wilderness
 Of Zara, were a smiling paradise.

ST. JUST.

Rightly thou judgest, Couthon ! He is one,
 Who flies from silent solitary anguish,
 Seeking forgetful peace amid the jar
 Of elements. The howl of maniac uproar
 Lulls to sad sleep the memory of himself.
 A calm is fatal to him—then he feels
 The dire upboilings of the storm within him.
 A tyger mad with inward wounds !—I dread
 The fierce and restless turbulence of guilt.

ROBESPIERRE.

Is not the commune ours ? The stern tribunal ?
 Dumas ? and Vivier ? Fleuriot ? and Louvet ?
 And Henriot ? We'll denounce an hundred, nor
 Shall they behold to-morrow's sun roll westward.

ROBESPIERRE, Junior.

Nay—I am sick of blood ; my aching heart
 Reviews the long, long train of hideous horrors
 That still have gloom'd the rise of the republic.
 I should have died before Toulon, when war
 Became the patriot !

ROBESPIERRE.

Most unworthy wish !
 He, whose heart sickens at the blood of traitors
 Would be himself a traitor, were he not

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A coward ! 'Tis congenial souls alone
Shed tears of sorrow for each other's fate.
O thou art brave, my brother ! and thine eye
Full firmly shines amid the gloaming battle—
Yet in thine heart the woman-form of pity
Asserts too large a share, an ill-timed guest !
There is unsoundness in the state—To-morrow
Shall see it cleans'd by wholesome massacre !

ROBESPIERRE, Junior.

Beware ! already do the sections murmur—

“ O the great glorious patriot, Robespierre—

“ The tyrant guardian of the country's freedom ! ”

COUTHON.

'Twere folly sure to work great deeds by halves !

Much I suspect the darksome fickle heart

Of cold Barrere !

ROBESPIERRE.

I see the villain in him !

ROBESPIERRE, Junior.

If he—if all forsake thee—what remains ?

ROBESPIERRE.

Myself ! the steel-strong Rectitude of soul

And Poverty sublime, 'mid circling virtues !

The giant Victories, my counsels form'd,

Shall stalk around me with sun-glittering plumes,

Bidding the darts of calumny fall pointless.

(*Exeunt ceteri. Manet Couthon.*)

COUTHON *solus.*

So we deceive ourselves ! What goodly virtues

Bloom on the poisonous branches of ambition !

Still, Robespierre ! thou'lt guard thy country's freedom

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

To despotize in all the patriot's pomp.
 While Conscience, 'mid the mob's applauding clamours,
 Sleeps in thine ear, nor whispers—blood-stain'd tyrant!
 Yet what is Conscience? Superstition's dream,
 Making such deep impresson on our sleep—
 That long th' awaken'd breast retains its horrors!
 But he returns—and with him comes Barrere.

(Exit Couthon.)

Enter ROBESPIERRE and BARRERE.

ROBESPIERRE.

There is no danger but in cowardice.—
 Barrere! we *make* the danger, when we *fear* it.
 We have such force without, as will suspend
 The cold and trembling treachery of these members.

BARRERE.

'Twill be a pause of terror.—

ROBESPIERRE.

But to whom?

Rather the short-lived slumber of the tempest,
 Gathering its strength anew. The dastard traitors!
 Moles, that would undermine the rooted oak!
 A pause!—a *moment's* pause?—'Tis all *their* life.

BARRERE.

Yet much they talk—and plausible their speech,
 Couthon's decree has given such powers, that

ROBESPIERRE.

That what?

BARRERE.

The freedom of debate—

ROBESPIERRE.

Transparent mask !
 They wish to clog the wheels of government,
 Forcing the hand that guides the vast machine
 To bribe them to their duty—*English* patriots !
 Are not the congregated clouds of war
 Black all around us ? In our very vitals
 Works not the king-bred poison of rebellion ?
 Say, what shall counteract the selfish plottings
 Of wretches, cold of heart, nor awed by fears
 Of him, whose power directs th' eternal justice ?
 Terror ? or secret-sapping gold ? The first
 Heavy, but transient as the ills that cause it ;
 And to the virtuous patriot rendered light
 By the necessities that gave it birth :
 The other fouls the fount of the republic,
 Making it flow polluted to all ages :
 Inoculates the state with a slow venom,
 That once imbibed, must be continued ever.
 Myself incorruptible I ne'er could bribe them—
 Therefore they hate me.

BARRERE.

Are the sectsions friendly ?

ROBESPIERRE.

There are who wish my ruin—but I'll make them
 Blush for the crime in blood !

BARRERE.

Nay—but I tell thee,
 Thou art too fond of slaughter—and the right
 (If right it be) workest by most foul means !

ROBESPIERRE.

Self-centering Fear! how well thou canst ape *Mercy!*
 Too fond of slaughter !—matchless hypocrite !

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

Thought Barrere so, when Brissot, Danton died?
 Thought Barrere so, when through the streaming streets
 Of Paris red-eyed Massacre o'er wearied
 Reel'd heavily, intoxicate with blood?
 And when (O heavens!) in Lyons' death-red square
 Sick fancy groan'd o'er putrid hills of slain,
 Didst thou not fiercely laugh, and bless the day?
 Why, thou hast been the mouth-piece of all horrors,
 And, like a blood-hound, crouch'd for murder! Now
 Aloof thou standest from the tottering pillar,
 Or, like a frightened child behind its mother,
 Hidest thy pale face in the skirts of—*Mercy!*

BARRERE.

O prodigality of eloquent anger!
 Why now I see thou'rt weak—thy case is desperate!
 The cool ferocious Robespierre turn'd scolder!

ROBESPIERRE.

Who from a bad man's bosom wards the blow
 Reserves the whetted dagger for his own.
 Denounced twice—and twice I saved his life!

(Exit.)

BARRERE.

The sectsions will support then—there's the point!
 No! he can never weather out the storm—
 Yet he is sudden in revenge—No more!
 I must away to Tallien.

(Exit.)

SCENE changes to the house of ADELAIDE.

ADELAIDE enters, speaking to a servant.

ADELAIDE.

Didst thou present the letter that I gave thee?

Did Tallien answer, he would soon return?

SERVANT.

He is in the Thuilleries—with him Legendre—
In deep discourse they seem'd : as I approach'd
He waved his hand as bidding me retire:

I did not interrupt him. (*Returns the letter.*)

ADELAIDE.

Thou didst rightly.

(*Exit. Servant.*)

O this new freedom! at how dear a price
We've bought the seeming good! The peaceful virtues
And every blandishment of private life,
The father's cares, the mother's fond endearment,
All sacrificed to liberty's wild riot.
The winged hours, that scatter'd roses round me,
Languid and sad drag their slow course along,
And shake big gall-drops from their heavy wings.
But I will steal away these anxious thoughts
By the soft languishment of warbled airs,
If haply melodies may lull the sense
Of sorrow for a while.

SOFT MUSIC.

Enter TALLIEN.

TALLIEN.

Music, my love? O breathe again that air!
Soft nurse of pain, it sooths the weary soul
Of care, sweet as the whisper'd breeze of evening
That plays around the sick man's throbbing temples.

SONG.

Tell me, on what holy ground
May domestic peace be found?

C

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

Halcyon daughter of the skies,
Far on fearful wing she flies,
From the pomp of scepter'd state,
From the rebel's noisy hate.

In a cottag'd vale she dwells
Lift'ning to the Sabbath bells!
Still around her steps are seen,
Spotless honor's meeker mein,
Love, the fire of pleasing fears,
Sorrow smiling through her tears,
And conscious of the past employ,
Memory, bosom-spring of joy.

TALLIEN.

I thank thee, Adelaide! 'twas sweet, though mournful.
But why thy brow o'ercast, thy cheek so wan?
Thou look'st as a lorn maid beside some stream
That sighs away the soul in fond despairing,
While sorrow sad, like the dank willow near her,
Hangs o'er the troubled fountain of her eye.

ADELAIDE.

Ah! rather let me ask what mystery lowers
On Tallien's darken'd brow. Thou dost me wrong—
Thy soul distemper'd, can my heart be tranquil?

TALLIEN.

Tell me, by whom thy brother's blood was spilt?
Asks he not vengeance on these patriot murderers?
It has been born too tamely. Fears and curses
Groan on our midnight beds, and e'en our dreams
Threaten the assassin hand of Robespierre.
He dies!—nor has the plot escaped his fears.

ADELAIDE.

Yet—yet—be cautious! much I fear the Commune—

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

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The tyrant's creatures, and their fate with his
Fast link'd in close indissoluble union.

The pale Convention—

TALLIEN.

Hate him as they fear him,
Impatient of the chain, resolv'd and ready.

ADELAIDE,

Th' enthusiast mob, confusion's lawless sons—

TALLIEN.

They are aweary of his stern morality,
The fair-mask'd offspring of ferocious pride.
The sections too support the delegates:
All—all is ours! e'en now the vital air
Of Liberty, condens'd awhile, is bursting
(Force irresistible!) from its compressure—
To shatter the arch chemist in the explosion!

Enter BILLAUD VARENNES and BOURDON L'OISE.

(Adelaide retires.)

BOURDON L'OISE.

Tallien! was this a time for amorous conference?
Henriot, the tyrant's most devoted creature,
Marshals the force of Paris: The fierce club,
With Vivier at their head, in loud acclaim
Have sworn to make the guillotine in blood
Float on the scaffold.—But who comes here?

Enter BARRERE abruptly.

BARRERE.

Say, are ye friends to freedom? *I am her's!*
Let us, forgetful of all common feuds,

Rally around her shrine ! E'en now the tyrant
Concerts a plan of instant massacre !

BILLAUD VARENNES.

Away to the Convention ! with that voice
So oft the herald of glad victory,
Rouse their fallen spirits, thunder in their ears
The names of tyrant, plunderer, assassin !
The violent workings of my soul within
Anticipate the monster's blood !

*(Cry from the street of—No Tyrant ! Down with
the Tyrant !)*

TALLIEN.

Hear ye that outcry ?—If the trembling members
Even for a moment hold his fate suspended,
I swear by the holy poniard, that stabbed Cæsar,
This dagger probes his heart !

(Exeunt omnes.)

A C T II.

SCENE, The Convention.

ROBESPIERRE *mounts the Tribune.*

Once more befits it that the voice of truth,
Fearless in innocence, though leagued round
By envy and her hateful brood of hell,
Be heard amid this hall ; once more befits
The patriot, whose prophetic eye so oft
Has pierced thro' faction's veil, to flash on crimes
Of deadliest import. Mouldering in the grave
Sleeps Capet's caitiff corse ; my daring hand
Levelled to earth his blood-cemented throne,

My voice declared his guilt, and stirred up France
 To call for vengeance. I too dug the grave
 Where sleep the Girondists, detested band!
 Long with the shew of freedom they abused
 Her ardent sons. Long time the well-turn'd phrase
 The high fraught sentence and the lofty tone
 Of declamation thunder'd in this hall,
 Till reason midst a labyrinth of words
 Perplex'd, in silence seem'd to yield assent.
 I durst oppose. Soul of my honoured friend,
 Spirit of Marat upon thee I call—
 Thou know'st me faithful, know'st with what warm zeal
 I urg'd the cause of justice, stripp'd the mask
 From factions deadly visage, and destroy'd
 Her traitor brood. Whose patriot arm hurl'd down
 Hebert and Routin, and the villain friends
 Of Danton, foul apostate! those, who long
 Mask'd treason's form in liberty's fair garb,
 Long deluged France with blood, and durst defy
 Omnipotence! but I it seems am false!
 I am a traitor too! I—Robespierre!
 I—at whose name the dastard despot brood
 Look pale with fear, and call on faints to help them!
 Who dares accuse me? who shall dare belie
 My spotless name? Speak, ye accomplice band,
 Of what am I accus'd? of what strange crime
 Is Maximilian Robespierre accus'd,
 That through this hall the buz of discontent
 Should murmur? who shall speak?

BILLAUD VARENNES.

O patriot tongue

Belying the foul heart! Who was it urg'd
 Friendly to tyrants that accurst decree,
 Whose influence brooding o'er this hallowed hall,
 Has chill'd each tongue to silence. Who destroyed
 The freedom of debate, and carried through

The fatal law, that doom'd the delegates,
Unheard before their equals, to the bar
Where cruelty sat throned, and murder reign'd
With her Dumas coequal? Say—thou man
Of mighty eloquence, whose law was that?

COUTRON.

That law was mine. I urg'd it—I propos'd—
The voice of France assembled in her sons
Assented, though the tame and timid voice
Of traitors murmur'd. I advis'd that law—
I justify it. It was wise and good.

BARRERE.

Oh, wonderous wise and most convenient too!
I have long mark'd thee, Robespierre—and now
Proclaim thee traitor—tyrant!
(*Loud applauses.*)

ROBESPIERRE.

It is well.

I am a traitor! oh, that I had fallen
When Regnault lifted high the murderous knife,
Regnault the instrument belike of those
Who now themselves would fain assassinate,
And legalize their murders. I stand here
An isolated patriot—hemmed around
By factions noisy pack; beset and bay'd
By the foul hell-hounds who know no escape
From justice' outstretch'd arm, but by the force
That pierces through her breast.
(*Murmurs, and shouts of—Down with the tyrant!*)

ROBESPIERRE.

Nay, but I will be heard. There was a time
When Robespierre began, the loud applauses
Of honest patriots drown'd the honest sound.

But times are chang'd, and villainy prevails.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

No—villainy shall fall. France could not brook
A monarch's sway—sounds the dictator's name
More soothing to her ear?

BOUQUON L'OISE.

Rattle her chains

More musically now than when the hand
Of Brissot forged her fetters; or the crew
Of Hebert thundered out their blasphemies,
And Danton talk'd of virtue?

ROBESPIERRE.

Oh, that Brissot

Were here again to thunder in this hall.
That Hebert lived, and Danton's giant form
Scowl'd once again defiance! so my soul
Might cope with worthy foes.

People of France

Hear me! Beneath the vengeance of the law,
Traitors have perish'd countless; more survive:
The hydra-headed faction lifts anew
Her daring front, and fruitful from her wounds,
Cautious from past defects, contrives new wiles
Against the sons of Freedom.

TALLIEN.

Freedom lives!

Oppression falls—for France has felt her chains,
Has burst them too. Who traitor-like step forth
Amid the hall of Jacobines to save
Camille Desmoulines, and the venal wretch
D'Eglantine?

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ROBESPIERRE.

I did—for I thought them honest.
And Heaven forefend that vengeance ere should strike,
Ere justice doom'd the blow,

BARRERE.

Traitor, thou didst.

Yes, the accomplice of their dark designs,
Awhile didst thou defend them, when the storm
Lower'd at safe distance. When the clouds frown'd darker,
Fear'd for yourself and left them to their fate.
Oh, I have mark'd thee long, and through the veil
Seen thy foul projects. Yes, ambitious man,
Self-will'd dictator o'er the realm of France,
The vengeance thou hast plann'd for patriots,
Falls on thy head. Look how thy brother's deeds
Dishonour thine! He the firm patriot,
Thou the foul parricide of Liberty!

ROBESPIERRE, Junior.

Barrere—attempt not meanly to divide
Me from my brother. I partake his guilt,
For I partake his virtue.

ROBESPIERRE.

Brother, by my soul,
More dear I hold thee to my heart, that thus
With me thou dar'st to tread the dangerous path
Of virtue, than that nature twined her cords
Of kindred round us.

BARRERE.

Yes, allied in guilt,
Even as in blood ye are. Oh, thou worst wretch,
Thou worse than Sylla! hast thou not proscrib'd
Yea, in most foul anticipation slaughter'd
Each patriot representative of France?

BOURDON L'OISE.

Was not the younger Cæsar too to reign
O'er all our valiant armies in the south,
And still continue there his merchant wiles?

ROBESPIERRE, Junior.

His merchant wiles! Oh, grant me patience, heaven!
Was it by merchant wiles I gain'd you back
Toulon, when proudly on her captive towers
Wav'd high the English flag? or fought I then
With merchant wiles, when sword in hand I led
Your troops to conquest? fought I merchant like,
Or barter'd I for victory, when death
Strode o'er the reeking streets with giant stride,
And shook his ebon plumes, and sternly smil'd
Amid the bloody banquet? when appal'd
The hireling sons of England spread the sail
Of safety, fought I like a merchant then?
Oh, patience! patience!

BOURDON L'OISE.

How this younger tyrant
Mouths out defiance to us! even so
He had led on the armies of the south,
Till once again the plains of France were drench'd
With her best blood.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Till once again display'd
Lyons' sad tragedy had call'd me forth
The minister of wrath, whilst slaughter by
Had bathed in human blood.

DUBOIS CRANCE.

No wonder, friend,
That we are traitors—that our heads must fall
Beneath the axe of death! when Cæsar-like

D

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

Reigns Robespierre, 'tis wisely done to doom
 The fall of Brutus. Tell me, bloody man,
 Hast thou not parcell'd out deluded France
 As it had been some province won in fight
 Between your curst triumvirate. You, Couthon,
 Go with my brother to the southern plains;
 St. Just, be yours the army of the north;
 Mean time I rule at Paris.

ROBESPIERRE.

Matchless knave!

What—not one blush of conscience on thy cheek—
 Not one poor blush of truth! most likely tale!
 That I who ruined Brissot's towering hopes,
 I who discovered Hebert's impious wiles,
 And sharp'd for Danton's recreant neck the axe,
 Should now be traitor! had I been so minded,
 Think ye I had destroyed the very men
 Whose plots resembled mine? bring forth your proofs
 Of this deep treason. Tell me in whose breast
 Found ye the fatal scroll? or tell me rather
 Who forg'd the shameless falsehood?

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Ask you proofs?

Robespierre, what proofs were ask'd when Brissot died?

LEGENDRE.

What proofs adduced you when the Danton died?
 When at the imminent peril of my life
 I rose, and fearless of thy frowning brow,
 Proclaim'd him guiltless?

ROBESPIERRE.

I remember well

The fatal day. I do repent me much
 That I kill'd Cæsar and spar'd Antony.

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But I have been too lenient. I have spar'd
The stream of blood, and now my own must flow
To fill the current.

(Loud applauses.)

Triumph not too soon,
Justice may yet be victor.

Enter St. Just, and mounts the Tribune.

ST. JUST.

I come from the committee—charged to speak
Of matters of high import. I omit
Their orders. Representatives of France,
Boldly in his own person speaks St. Just
What his own heart shall dictate.

TALLIEN.

Hear ye this,
Insulted delegates of France? St. Just
From your committee comes—comes charg'd to speak
Of matters of high import—yet omits
Their orders! Representatives of France,
That bold man I denounce, who disobey's
The nations orders,—I denounce St. Just.

(Loud applauses.)

ST. JUST.

Hear me!

(Violent murmurs.)

ROBESPIERRE.

He shall be heard!

BURDON L'OISE.

Must we contaminate this sacred hall
With the foul breath of treason?

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Drag him away !

Hence with him to the bar.

COUTAON.

Oh, just proceedings !

Robespierre prevented liberty of speech—

And Robespierre is a tyrant ! Tallien reigns,

He dreads to hear the voice of innocence—

And St. Just must be silent !

LEGENBRE.

Heed we well

That justice guide our actions. No light import

Attends this day. I move St. Just be heard.

FRERON.

Inviolable be the sacred right of man,

The freedom of debate.

(Violent applauses.)

ST. JUST.

I may be heard then ! much the times are chang'd,

When St. Just thanks this hall for hearing him.

Robespierre is call'd a tyrant. Men of France

Judge not too soon. By popular discontent

Was Aristides driven into exile,

Was Phocion murder'd ? Ere ye dare pronounce

Robespierre is guilty, it befits ye well,

Consider who accuse him. Tallien,

Bourdon of Oise—the very men denounced,

For that their dark intrigues disturb'd the plan

Of government. Legendre the sworn friend

Of Danton fall'n apostate. Dubois Crance,

He who at Lyons spar'd the royalists—

Collot d'Herbois—

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BOURDON L'OISE.

What—shall the traitor rear
His head amid our tribune—and blaspheme
Each patriot? shall the hireling slave of faction—

ST. JUST.

I am of no one faction. I contend
Against all factions.

TALLIEN.

I espouse the cause
Of truth. Robespierre on yester morn pronounced
Upon his own authority a report.
To-day St. Just comes down. St. Just neglects
What the committee orders, and harangues
From his own will. O citizens of France
I weep for you—I weep for my poor country—
I tremble for the cause of Liberty,
When individuals shall assume the sway,
And with more insolence than kingly pride
Rule the republic.

BILLAUD VARENNES.

Shudder, ye representatives of France,
Shudder with horror. Henriot commands
The marshall'd force of Paris. Henriot,
Foul parricide—the sworn ally of Hebert
Denounced by all—upheld by Robespierre.
Who spar'd La Valette? who promoted him,
Stain'd with the deep die of nobility?
Who to an ex-peer gave the high command?
Who screen'd from justice the rapacious thief?
Who cast in chains the friends of Liberty?
Robespierre, the self-stil'd patriot Robespierre—
Robespierre, allied with villain Daubigné—
Robespierre, the foul arch tyrant Robespierre.

BOUADON L'OISE.

He talks of virtue—of morality—
 Consistent patriot ! he Daubigné's friend !
 Henriot's supporter virtuous ! preach of virtue,
 Yet league with villains, for with Robespierre
 Villains alone ally. Thou art a tyrant !
 I stile thee tyrant Robespierre !

(Loud applauses.)

ROBESPIERRE.

Take back the name. Ye citizens of France—

(Violent clamour. Cries of—Down with the Tyrant!)

TALLIEN.

Oppression falls. The traitor stands appall'd—
 Guilt's iron fangs engrasp his shrinking soul—
 He hears assembled France denounce his crimes !
 He sees the mask torn from his secret sins—
 He trembles on the precipice of fate.
 Fall'n guilty tyrant ! murder'd by thy rage
 How many an innocent victim's blood has stain'd
 Fair freedom's altar ! Sylla-like thy hand
 Mark'd down the virtues, that, thy foes removed,
 Perpetual Dictator thou might'st reign,
 And tyrannize o'er France, and call it freedom !
 Long time in timid guilt the traitor plann'd
 His fearful wiles—success emboldened him—
 And his stretch'd arm had grasp'd the diadem
 Ere now, but that the coward's heart recoil'd,
 Lest France awak'd, should rouse her from her dream,
 And call aloud for vengeance. He, like Cæsar,
 With rapid step urged on his bold career,
 Even to the summit of ambitious power,
 And deem'd the name of King alone was wanting.
 Was it for this we hurl'd proud Capet down ?
 Is it for this we wage eternal war
 Against the tyrant horde of murderers,

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

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The crowned cockatrices whose foul venom
Infects all Europe? was it then for this
We swore to guard our liberty with life,
That Robespierre should reign? the spirit of freedom
Is not yet sunk so low. The glowing flame
That animates each honest Frenchman's heart
Not yet extinguish'd. I invoke thy shade,
Immortal Brutus! I too wear a dagger;
And if the representatives of France,
Through fear or favor should delay the sword
Of justice, Tallien emulates thy virtues;
Tallien, like Brutus, lifts the avenging arm;
Tallien shall save his country.

(Violent applauses.)

BILLAUD VARENNES.

I demand
The arrest of all the traitors. Memorable
Will be this day for France.

ROBESPIERRE.

Yes! Memorable
This day will be for France—for villains triumph.

LEBAS.

I will not share in this day's damning guilt.
Condemn me too.

(Great cry—Down with the Tyrants!)

*(The two Robespierres, Couthon, St. Just, and Lebas
are led off.)*

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

A C T III.

SCENE Continues.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Cæsar is fallen ! The baneful tree of Java,
Whose death-distilling boughs dropt poisonous dew,
Is rooted from its base. This worse than Cromwell,
The austere, the self denying Robespierre,
Even in this hall, where once with terror mute
We listened to the hypocrite's harangues,
Has heard his doom.

BILLAUD VARENNES.

Yet must we not suppose
The tyrant will fall tamely. His sworn hireling
Henriot, the daring desperate Henriot
Commands the force of Paris. I denounce him.

FRERON.

I denounce Fluriot too, the mayor of Paris.

Enter DUBOIS CRANCE.

DUBOIS CRANCE.

Robespierre is rescued. Henriot at the head
Of the arm'd force has rescued the fierce tyrant.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

Ring the tocsin—call all the citizens
To save their country—never yet has Paris
Forfook the representatives of France.

TALLIEN.

It is the hour of danger. I propose
This fitting be made permanent.

(Loud applauses.)

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

The national Convention shall remain
Firm at its post.

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

Robespierre has reach'd the Commune. They espouse
The tyrant's cause. St. Just is up in arms!
St. Just—the young ambitious bold St. Just
Harangues the mob. The sanguinary Couthon
Thirsts for your blood.

(Tocfin rings.)

TALLIEN.

These tyrants are in arms against the law:
Outlaw the rebels.

Enter MERLIN OF DOUAY.

MERLIN.

Health to the representatives of France!
I past this moment through the armed force—
They ask'd my name—and when they heard a delegate,
Swore I was not the friend of France.

COLLOT D'HERBOIS.

The tyrants threaten us as when they turn'd
The cannon's mouth on Brissot.

E

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

Enter another MESSENGER.

(*as before*) SECOND MESSENGER.

Vivier harangues the Jacobins—the club
Espouse the cause of Robespierre.

Enter another MESSENGER.

THIRD MESSENGER.

All's lost—the tyrant triumphs. Henriot leads
The foldiers to his aid.—Already I hear
The rattling cannon destin'd to furround
This sacred hall.

TALLIEN.

Why, we will die like men then.
The representatives of France dare death,
When duty steels their bosoms.

(*Loud applauses.*)

TALLIEN *addressing the galleries.*

Citizens !

France is insulted in her delegates—
The majesty of the republic is insulted—
Tyrants are up in arms. An armed force
Threats the Convention. The Convention swears
To die, or save the country !

(*Violent applauses from the galleries.*)

CITIZEN *from above.*

We too swear
To die, or save the country. Follow me.

(*All the men quit the galleries.*)

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

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Enter another MESSENGER.

FOURTH MESSENGER.

Henriot is taken!—

(Loud applauses.)

Henriot is taken. Three of your brave soldiers
Swore they would seize the rebel slave of tyrants,
Or perish in the attempt. As he patroll'd
The streets of Paris, stirring up the mob,
They seiz'd him.

(Applauses.)

BILLAUD VARENNES.

Let the names of these brave men
Live to the future day.

Enter BOURDON L'OISE sword in hand.

BOURDON L'OISE.

I have clear'd the Commune.

(Applauses.)

Through the throng I rush'd,
Brandishing my good sword to drench its blade
Deep in the tyrant's heart. The timid rebels
Gave way. I met the soldiery—I spake
Of the dictator's crimes—of patriots chain'd
In dark deep dungeons by his lawless rage—
Of knaves secure beneath his fostering power.
I spake of Liberty. Their honest hearts
Caught the warm flame, The general shout burst forth,
“Live the Convention—Down with Robespierre!”

(Applauses.)

(Shouts from without—Down with the tyrant!)

TALLIEN.

I hear, I hear the soul-inspiring sounds,
France shall be saved! her generous sons attached

THE FALL OF ROBESPIERRE.

To principles, not persons, spurn the idol
 They worshipp'd once. Yes, Robespierre shall fall
 As Capet fell! Oh! never let us deem
 That France shall crouch beneath a tyrant's throne,
 That the almighty people who have broke
 On their oppressors heads the oppressive chain,
 Will court again their fetters! easier were it
 To hurl the cloud-capt mountain from its base,
 Than force the bonds of slavery upon men
 Determined to be free!

(*Applauses.*)

Enter LEGENDRE—*A pistol in one hand. Keys in the other.*

LEGENDRE. *Flinging down the keys.*
 So—let the mutinous Jacobins meet now
 In the open air.

(*Loud applauses.*)

A factious turbulent party

Lording it o'er the state since Danton died,
 And with him the Cordeliers.—A hireling band
 Of loud-tongued orators controull'd the club,
 And bade them bow the knee to Robespierre.
 Vivier has 'scap'd me. Curse his coward heart—
 This fate-fraught tube of Justice in my hand
 I rush'd into the hall. He mark'd mine eye
 That beam'd its patriot anger, and flash'd full
 With death-denouncing meaning. 'Mid the throng
 He mingled. I pursued—but staid my hand,
 Left haply I might shed the innocent blood.

(*Applauses.*)

FRERON.

They took from me my ticket of admission—
 Expell'd me from their sittings.—Now, forsooth,
 Humbled and trembling re-insert my name.

But Freron enters not the club again
'Till it be purg'd of guilt—'till, purified
Of tyrants and of traitors, honest men
May breathe the air in safety.

(Shouts from without.)

BARRERE.

What means this uproar ! if the tyrant band
Should gain the people once again to rise—
We are as dead !

TALLIEN.

And wherefore fear we death ?
Did Brutus fear it ? or the Grecian friends
Who buried in Hipparchus breast the sword,
And died triumphant ? Cæsar should fear death,
Brutus must scorn the bugbear.

*(Shouts from without. Live the Convention—Down
with the Tyrants!)*

TALLIEN.

Hark ! again
The sounds of honest Freedom !

Enter DEPUTIES from the SECTIONS.

CITIZEN.

Citizens ! representatives of France !
Hold on your steady course. The men of Paris
Espouse your cause. The men of Paris swear
They will defend the delegates of Freedom.

TALLIEN.

Hear ye this, Colleagues ? hear ye this, my brethren ?
And does no thrill of joy pervade your breasts ?
My bosom bounds to rapture. I have seen

The sons of France shake off the tyrant yoke;
 I have, as much as lies in mine own arm,
 Hurl'd down the usurper.—Come death when it will
 I have lived long enough.
(Shouts without.)

BARRERE.

Hark! how the noise increases! through the gloom
 Of the still evening—harbinger of death
 Rings the tocsin! the dreadful generale
 Thunders through Paris—
(Cry without—Down with the Tyrant!)

Enter LECOINTRE.

LECOINTRE.

So may eternal justice blast the foes
 Of France! so perish all the tyrant brood,
 As Robespierre has perished! Citizens,
 Cæsar is taken.
(Loud and repeated applauses.)

I marvel not, that with such fearless front,
 He braved our vengeance, and with angry eye
 Scowled round the hall defiance. He relied
 On Henriot's aid—the Commune's villain friendship,
 And Henriot's *boughten* succours. Ye have heard
 How Henriot rescued him—how with open arms
 The Commune welcom'd in the rebel tyrant—
 How Fluriot aided, and seditious Vivier
 Stirr'd up the Jacobins. All had been lost—
 The representatives of France had perish'd—
 Freedom had sunk beneath the tyrant arm
 Of this foul parricide, but that her spirit
 Inspir'd the men of Paris. Henriot call'd
 “To arms” in vain, whilst Bourdon's patriot voice
 Breath'd eloquence, and o'er the Jacobins

Legendre frown'd dismay. The tyrants fled—
 They reach'd the Hotel. We gather'd round—we call'd
 For vengeance! Long time, obstinate in despair
 With knives they hack'd around them. 'Till foreboding
 The sentence of the law, the clamorous cry
 Of joyful thousands hailing their destruction,
 Each fought by suicide to escape the dread
 Of death. Lebas succeeded. From the window
 Leapt the younger Robespierre, but his fractur'd limb
 Forbade to escape. The self-will'd dictator
 Plung'd often the keen knife in his dark breast,
 Yet impotent to die. He lives all mangled
 By his own tremulous hand! All gash'd and gored
 He lives to taste the bitterness of death.
 Even now they meet their doom. The bloody Couthon,
 The fierce St. Just, even now attend their tyrant
 To fall beneath the axe. I saw the torches
 Flash on their visages a dreadful light—
 I saw them whilst the black blood roll'd adown
 Each stern face, even then with dauntless eye
 Scowl round contemptuous, dying as they lived,
 Fearless of fate!

(Loud and repeated applauses.)

BARRERE *mounts the Tribune.*

For ever hallowed be this glorious day,
 When Freedom, bursting her oppressive chain,
 Tramples on the oppressor. When the tyrant
 Hurl'd from his blood-cemented throne, by the arm
 Of the almighty people, meets the death
 He plann'd for thousands. Oh! my sickening heart
 Has sunk within me, when the various woes
 Of my brave country crowded o'er my brain
 In ghastly numbers—when assembled hordes

Dragg'd from their hovels by despotic power
 Rush'd o'er her frontiers, plunder'd her fair hamlets,
 And sack'd her populous towns, and drench'd with
 blood

The reeking fields of Flanders.—When within,
 Upon her vitals prey'd the rankling tooth
 Of treason ; and oppression, giant form,
 Trampling on freedom, left the alternative
 Of slavery, or of death. Even from that day,
 When, on the guilty Capet, I pronounced
 The doom of injured France, has faction reared
 Her hated head amongst us. Roland preach'd
 Of mercy—the uxorious dotard Roland,
 The woman-govern'd Roland durst aspire
 To govern France ; and Petion talk'd of virtue,
 And Vergniaud's eloquence, like the honeyed tongue
 Of some soft Syren wooed us to destruction.
 We triumphed over these. On the same scaffold
 Where the last Louis pour'd his guilty blood,
 Fell Brissot's head, the womb of darksome treasons,
 And Orleans, villain kinsman of the Capet,
 And Hebert's atheist crew, whose maddening hand
 Hurl'd down the altars of the living God,
 With all the infidels intolerance.

The last worst traitor triumphed—triumph'd long,
 Secur'd by matchless villainy. By turns
 Defending and deserting each accomplice
 As interest prompted. In the goodly soil
 Of Freedom, the foul tree of treason struck
 Its deep-fix'd roots, and dropt the dews of death
 On all who slumbered in its specious shade.
 He wove the web of treachery. He caught
 The listening crowd by his wild eloquence,
 His cool ferocity that persuaded murder,
 Even whilst it spake of mercy !—never, never
 Shall this regenerated country wear

The despot yoke. Though myriads round assail,
And with worse fury urge this new crusade
Than savages have known ; though the leagued despots
Depopulate all Europe, so to pour
The accumulated mass upon our coasts,
Sublime amid the storm shall France arise,
And like the rock amid surrounding waves
Repel the rushing ocean.—She shall wield
The thunder-bolt of vengeance—she shall blast
The despot's pride, and liberate the world !

F I N I S.

THE FALL OF ROBERTS

The deluge came, I heard it roar and fall,
And with wild fury swept the new world
That savages have known; though the deluge
Deluged all before it, to the sea
The accursed and the accursed
And like the rock amid the stormy waves
I feel the rushing waters—she had
The thunder of the waves—the fall
The deluge came, and he was the first

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